1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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434 593 the children upon the home farm and the role of the dispersed children in helping the old couple and the brother or sister at home is part of the general "friendliness" by which the Irish countryman sums up the family obligations. The two roles are felt to be the same, and they are described in the same terms, as the obligations of actual charity between country families, agricultural coöperation, and ceremonial assistance at marriages, wakes, and funerals. Brother and sister send back gifts to the home farm, especially when [431] the old couple are still alive. Gifts of money, clothing, and presents of all descriptions are sent back. Geese, farm delicacies, and such mementos as shamrocks go from the farm to those relatives that keep in touch.

593 602 167 484 At family crises, such as death, marriage, and birth, the new bonds come strongly into play and, where possible, the dispersed relatives come back to the farm at that time. The emigrant returns, if he does so at all, to the very townland of his birth, either to buy the old place or to settle near-by. In fact, there are many instances of countrymen, returned Americans, Australians, South Africans, and British soldiers, who have roamed over the world but have never seen more of Ireland than their route to and from their port of embarkation and the nearest market towns.

593 152 533 The sentiments of place, farm, and family become so inextricably intermingled as to be almost one. Perhaps the peculiarly Irish type of song and music owes its character as well as its popularity to that fact. The laments for a dear one, especially a mother, and the pangs of exile are the major motives. They are sung to the same tunes and call forth the same tears.

593 The break-up of the family at the transfer of land has changed the relation between the dispersed children and the old couple, just as it has changed that between the new farm family and their parents. Control of expenditure, in fact all vestiges of the strict parental control, is perforce

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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the small farmers as being a 'cut' below themselves; consequently, his untidiness is a byword among them. One version of the story goes, in synopsis, as follows:

"Many families moved into a herdsman's place, but they were all chased out of it. Finally, one family moved in, cleaned up the house, and a 'paving path' round it. A little old woman visits the wife, borrows a cooking-pot, and is similarly well treated. In gratitude she explains that the woman of the house and her husband will always prosper and never be molested, because they alone of all the families had cleaned up the place where 'they' walk."

In this way the values of daily life are projected into and reinforced by the supernatural world. The same state of affairs holds good even in the convention of social intercourse. The vocabulary of the countryman is full of homely pieties. On entering a house the proper greeting is "God bless all here". On coming upon another at work, one says, "God bless the work". Similarly, "God spare you the health" is 'put on' anyone who 'coors' with you. Any praise of person, child, or animal is accompanied with a "God bless it"; any mention of unpleasantness or danger is followed with some such homily as "God bless the mark", and so on. If one omits such pieties, one is sure to rouse resentment in the listeners. For one must remember that emotion supports these conventions. But the

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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152 576 626 resentment springs from other causes, too. These formulae are known to the folklorist as 'protective formulae'. He means by that that they have reference to the lesser faith as well as to the greater that the countryman holds.

751 152 576 626 If you ask the countryman why he uses such terms, he will give you several answers. First, "You have right to do it, because you owe it to God", and then, second, "It will bring good luck, it will keep 'them' away". For the countryman, both answers are true. The phrases are both acts of pious invocation and protective devices warding off evil. Their omission is really dangerous. It puts the person or thing so neglected in jeopardy; the negligent speaker is open to suspicion of an evil intent. Thus there are many stories which attribute disease, disaster and death to such omissions. In this way again, persons and things of value to the countryman are brought into the scope of his beliefs and attitudes. The forces which affect them are brought into a shape in which he can understand them and in which he can cope with them.

776 Perhaps the most interesting part of this process is to be found in the way in which the goods by which the countryman lives are brought into his belief. The good people affect the household and all its goods. They 'take' those things which one values, round which one's interest and sentiments, as a member of the farm-working family, are centred. One Galway woman phrased this idea to

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

000 Strangers who spend weeks or months in Inis Beag and are able to grasp some of the realities of life there often leave emotionally distraught, knowing that they 609 never will be accepted by the people. Acceptance by the islanders is a problem faced by not only outsiders, but by immigrants. The latter remain strangers for two or three generations, and some people, particularly descendants of fisherfolk, are regarded as outsiders despite the fact that the families of some have resided in [152] Inis Beag for almost a century. Later we will learn that the islanders have difficulty [602] forming affectional bonds among themselves, even among kin; thus, they are able to give even less of themselves to those "who do not belong." Strangers who know Inis Beag well often complain that they must do all of the "giving," as the folk can only "take."

The islanders also share attitudes toward other individuals and groups, which I can mention only in passing. Among the most important are those concerning outsiders who have lived in Inis Beag for long periods of time (the expatriate Dane, lighthouse keepers, Brendan Behan the writer, and Siobhain McKenna the actress); writers who have composed works about the island and have dwelled there or are folk themselves; particular persons from Inis Thiar and other nearby islands (a policeman, a teacher, a man of great strength, a keeper of a guest house, and a man who provides taxi service between the islands and the mainland in a small boat); peasants from bordering counties; religious groups (Protestants generally, members of the Church of Ireland, Jews, and even Italian Catholics); ethnic and racial groups (Americans, English, Germans, Negroes, tinkers, and foreigners as a class); and, finally, politicians and government bureaucrats and the Irish press.

609 I know of but few cases of discrimination practiced against any of these, 829 but prejudices held against some of them abound, based either on historical 186 experiences (with the English and the Church of Ireland) or on views inculcated by returned emigrants (concerning Jews and Negroes, who seldom visit Inis Beag). [123] Islanders, as well as most Irish, are ambivalent about "Yanks," as visiting emigrants from the United States are called, but are mostly critical of them; often my wife and I have been asked on first meeting an Irish person whether we are Irish-Americans or "real Americans," and when we have admitted to being the latter we have been well received. Conversely, we have seen Yanks shunned on revealing their pedigree. They are accused of "lording it over" their Irish kin and friends.

Formal Social Control

000 Anthropologists customarily classify social control systems as formal and informal. Formal systems are governments whose controls are based on physical violence or its threat—physical punishment, ostracism, banishment, and extermination; while informal systems include sanctions of a religious or economic nature and those exercised by primary groups—gossip, ridicule, persuasion, and opprobrium. Controls of a negative nature are buttressed by positive rewards, such as services provided by a government or the feeling of security gained from primary group approval. It is not the formal system of local and national governments

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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581 Marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare in folk societies throughout the world, and this is illustrated in Inis Beag by two statements made to me by middle-aged, married men: one said that marriage is a matter of "making a good living," and the other that the attributes of an ideal wife are, "She keeps the fire going, has the tea ready, and listens to a man's troubles." Performing economic tasks, satisfying sexual needs, and rearing children are the *raison d'etre* for women according to most island men, but this does not mean 581 that affection between spouses is lacking. The relationship between most mates, 593 however, is one of "accommodation," and the affection, if present, lacks depth. It is said that "husbands and wives never walk together;" but my wife and I have observed two couples who often fail to observe this dictum, between whom conjugal love as defined in the Western tradition appears to exist. Intimate communication between mates is rare, as it is between most folk—including even mothers and sons and those who are allied through institutionalized friendship. [578] Several disputing husbands and wives have not spoken to one another, except formally, for many years. In the case of disputes of this sort—as well as those involving other kin in the household—the parties involved limit as much as possible both contact and cooperation between themselves rather than resort to abusive [691] argument. Physical assault is unusual, but that the repressed wish to perpetrate violence may be widespread is attested by the delirious response of the islanders to the plot of John M. Synge's play, *The Playboy of the Western World*, when related to them; in it peasants of Co. Mayo laud the youthful "playboy, Christy" for apparently "slaying his da" (father) with a "loy" (spade). The act which so horrified viewers of nativistic persuasion in Dublin and Boston half a century ago arouses the opposite effect among the folk.

593 Women commonly express jealousy of and resentment against not only 461 what they consider the less time consuming and stressful work load of men, but 152 also the greater freedom enjoyed by their husbands. Many times women confided [642] to my wife that they are greatly distressed at being forced to remain home minding their children and performing tedious household chores, while their spouses range the entire island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits and are involved 829 in numerous social activities forbidden by custom to women. Some of these same 593 women expressed deep concern over being compelled by the unauthorized decree 562 of local curates, as well as by the sexual demands of their mates, to produce as [858] many offspring as possible; they complained that the constant bearing and rearing of children increase their work, restrict their freedom, and perpetuate the poverty 461 of their families. Few men whom we questioned were aware—or were willing to 562 admit—that such sentiments are held by their wives, but most men cited as one of the more attractive aspects of local life their being bossed by no one and being able to shift from one job to another among a wide variety to avoid boredom. Men are away from their homes much of the time, day and night, and they do far more "social" walking about the island, visiting relatives and acquaintances, and going to Inis Thiar and the mainland than do their spouses. Also, they frequent the pubs and attend the summer *céilí* on the common land, which married women do not.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, and they will desist from it the night before they are to perform tasks which will require the expenditure of great energy. Women are approached sexually neither during menstruation nor for at least six months after childbirth, for they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these times. Returned Yanks have been denounced from the pulpit for describing American sexual mores to local youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as *Time* and *Life*, mailed home by relatives from abroad, have aroused curates to spirited sermon and instruction.

Male masturbation seems to be common in Inis Beag (sometimes called the major "escape valve" for frustration in Ireland), but premarital coitus is unknown and marital copulation is limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. Elders proudly insist that premarital sexual activities of any sort do not occur in the island, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the bolder of them kiss and handle outside of their clothing. Inis Beag girls, it is held by their lovers, do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact; the male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the curate. Absolute privacy at night is sought by married couples when they copulate, and foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body of the woman, especially her buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband, and the wife is usually totally passive. Only the male superior position is employed, and intercourse takes place with underclothes not fully removed; orgasm for the man is achieved quickly, after which he falls asleep almost immediately. Whenever I talked with males of sexual practices other than those just described, my remarks were met with disbelief, or I was accused of "codding" my listeners.

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies, such as nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. We have noted elsewhere the fear of nudity—which precludes washing the body and bathing in the sea—and the secrecy surrounding the acts of urination and defecation and the use of human manure as fertilizer and cow dung as fuel. The sexual symbolism of nudity not only has resulted in the drowning of seamen who might have saved themselves had they been able to swim, but in the death of men who were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might mean baring their bodies to her, and thus were beyond help when finally treated. An island nurse confided to me that she was physically assaulted by the mother of a young man for diagnosing his illness in the mother's absence and bathing his chest as the woman entered his bedroom. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, especially when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some cottages, dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this behavior outside when unobserved.

Hypochondria and depression in Inis Beag are inextricably linked, in that the former composes part of the syndrome of the latter; and just as sexual puritanism is undergirded by masochism, so are these two traits. Little more need be said about the causes of depression among the folk, other than to bring together factors which have been discussed earlier: the extent to which their lives are circumscribed by the will of the priest and other figures of authority; their poverty

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and the never ending toil needed to maintain present subsistence standards; the spying and malicious gossiping of their fellows and the ubiquity of jealousy and envy; the isolation of the island, particularly during winter months; numbing boredom and the dearth of social activities; for women, the lack of freedom and of attention and affection from their spouses, as well as the necessity of enduring sexual relations; and, as stated above, hypochondria. Much has been written about isolation and its depressive effects on the islanders, and the folk themselves constantly complain of being shut off from the world and prey to wind, rain, fog, and raging sea. But isolation need not lead inevitably to depression, for my wife and I conducted research in another island of Ireland—far distant from and even more inaccessible than Inis Beag—where the inhabitants do not feel isolated and are not depressed.

I have expanded the clinical usage of the term hypochondria to include fears of the spirit as well as fears of the body, for ill health can as often be induced by supernatural forces, and death—whether by disease, injury, or aging—is the ultimate fear with its threat of eternal damnation. Colds, influenza, dyspepsia, migraine headaches, teeth decay, the crippling effects of joint and muscle ailments, hypermetrophy, and mental illness are paramount among health concerns. "Flu" epidemics are frequent in the island and are a chief cause of death among people who have become weakened by old age. As the folk advance in years, they come to spend more time in bed and by the turf fire and venture out less during the winter and when it rains. Drafts are avoided whenever possible, and clothes dampened by seas which wash the canoes or by rain are changed for dry ones at the first opportunity. Colds, flu, indigestion, and headaches more than any other afflictions send the islanders to the nurse for drugs and to their own folk remedies for relief. Dyspepsia is known as "wind" and is thought to result from diet, but the nurses say that most cases of indigestion are the result of tension—"nervous stomach." Nine cases of migraine were reported in Inis Beag during 1959, but many other islanders, most of whom are women, suffer from "nervous headache" which can approach migraine in intensity of pain. Neither my wife nor I were ill during the winter of 1959 and 1960, even though we were abroad in all sorts of inclement weather against the advice of our neighbors; when we began picking wild garlic to season our food, it was reasoned that the condiment afforded us protection against the flu, which reached almost epidemic proportions that year, and as a result this folk medicine was used more widely and consistently than usual.

Nativists and primitivists praise the health and hardiness of the folk and boast of the absence of rheumatism and allied infirmities among them and the sharpness of their sight. But, just as most adults past 30 years of age suffer from decay and loss of teeth, they also suffer from muscle and joint ailments, caused by the "damp and cold," and from far-sightedness. It is not known how many folk wear glasses in the privacy of their homes, but only two persons, both men, wear them publicly—and self-consciously when they do. Most glasses are not prescription made but are purchased in mainland shops after many pairs displayed on the counters have been tested, and often a single pair will serve the needs of all the elders of a household. The islanders among themselves constantly complain of these and other ailments, although some will praise the health and hardiness of the local

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub. Both step- and set-dancing are practiced in Inis Beag, although the former type is dying out. This rigid-body dancing, from which sex is removed by shifting attention below the hips, appears to have originated in Ireland during the early nineteenth century. The set patterns keep partners separated most of the time; but, even so, some girls refuse to dance, because it involves touching a boy. Inis Beag men, while watching a woman step-dance, stare fixedly at her feet, and they take pains to appear indifferent when crowding at a party necessitates holding women on their laps and rubbing against them when moving from room to room. But they are extremely sensitive, nevertheless, to the entire body of the dancer and to these casual contacts, as are the women. Their covert emotional reactions (which become overt as much drink is taken) are a form of catharsis.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS HISTORICAL CAUSES

Analysts of Irish character have put forth various hypotheses to account for sexual repression, ranging from the sophisticated to the absurd. The former can be classified under three rubrics: historical (e.g., the influence of ascetic monasticism, Augustinianism, and Jansenism), sociocultural (e.g., the Oedipus complex in the Irish family and male solidarity), and psychological (e.g., masochism). Beyond serious scientific consideration are such hypotheses as the loss of the Irish tongue, lack of a Catholic aristocracy, fear of Protestant libertinism, and the ever-appealed-to factors of race, climate, and the famine. In the following paragraphs, I will quote excerpts from Irish authors and from critical observers of the Irish scene, including social scientists, rather than dissect their views myself.

Paul Blanshard, in his polemical but insightful (and, in my estimation, often understated) work, *The Irish and Catholic Power,* says that "whatever the explanation, the total sexual expression of the Irish people is much less than it is in other countries, and that the Catholic crusade against normal sexual life has actually created a nation of men and women who try to drown their fundamental instincts." In attempting to account for sexual repression on such a scale, he writes: